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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000752

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: TIBET: JAPANESE CALL ON CHINA TO EXERCISE  
RESTRAINT, CONCERNED ABOUT IMPACT ON HU VISIT

REF: TOKYO 00509

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Japan is deeply concerned about the violence in Tibet and has called on the Chinese authorities to respond calmly, MOFA contacts told Embassy Tokyo on March

¶18. Japan raised its concerns with the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo, and the Japanese Embassy in Beijing called on the Chinese authorities to exercise restraint. Japan will watch the situation closely and is still deciding what steps to take if the violence escalates. The violence in Tibet, coupled with the food safety concerns, could tarnish President Hu Jintao's spring visit to Japan. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Japan is very concerned about the Tibetan unrest in China and is watching the situation closely, MOFA China Division Principal Deputy Director Kazuya Endo told Embassy Tokyo on March 18. In a meeting with Chinese MFA Asia Director Hu in Beijing on March 16, Japanese Embassy DCM Kunio Umeda called on China to exercise restraint and to respond calmly to the unrest in Tibet. In addition, MOFA urged the Chinese authorities to "respond calmly" during a meeting with Chinese embassy officials in Tokyo the same day. Separately, Foreign Minister Koumura told the press on March 18 that Beijing should be "open and transparent" in dealing with the protests, Endo said.

¶3. (C) Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi sent Foreign Minister Koumura a letter on March 17 explaining the Tibetan unrest, and Tokyo is still deciding how to respond, Endo continued. Along these lines, MOFA asked Embassy Tokyo whether Secretary Rice is planning to contact Foreign Minister Yang. Japanese Foreign Minister Koumura ruled out boycotting the Olympic Games in Beijing in response to the violence, according to the press.

¶4. (C) Japanese officials from the embassy in Beijing requested Chinese government permission to travel to Lhasa, but the request was denied, Endo noted. MOFA is not aware of any Japanese citizens being injured in the unrest, but issued a travel warning on March 15. Japan is continuing to urge China to ensure the safety of foreigners living and traveling in Tibet, Endo stated.

¶5. (C) The unrest in Tibet, coupled with Japanese public concern over food safety -- following the food poisoning cases caused by frozen dumplings imported from China -- "could slow the warming trend in Japan-China ties," said. He

visited Beijing on March 15 to attend a ceremony celebrating Japan-China youth exchanges, involving two thousand Japanese and Chinese participants, and noted the event received very little attention in the Japanese press. It is natural the press focused on the unrest in Tibet, but it was a missed opportunity to highlight improved bilateral ties, Endo explained.

16. (C) Japan is working hard to preserve a warm atmosphere for Chinese President Hu Jintao's spring visit to Japan, Endo said. The dates are still unconfirmed, but Hu will likely visit in early May. Japan and China are still "in the early planning stages" on a "fourth joint communiqu." That said, progress on the document is slow-going, and it is not certain that a joint statement will be released, Endo explained.  
SCHIEFFER